

efforts, as they exemplify the impact the private sector can have on our communities.

Mr. Speaker, this Congress has begun the process of localizing, privatizing, and eliminating outmoded and counterproductive Federal programs. But that isn't enough. The American people—through their families, religious and civic organizations and through their workplace—must make a commitment to be personally responsible for solving the challenges that face us. Ken Enns and Enns Packing have done just that. Ken and Enns Packing serve as a model for each of us. I urge every American to study how Ken has contributed to his community. Most importantly, I urge every American to put into practice in their own lives the lesson that Ken can teach us.

ATTORNEY GENERAL AWARD TO
STEPHANIE BOUCHER

HON. BENJAMIN A. GILMAN

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 13, 1997

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to offer recognition to an individual who recently received an extraordinary honor for her contributions at the workplace. Stephanie Boucher, the wife of one of my legislative assistants, received an Appreciation Award from the Attorney General on September 26, 1997.

What is unusual about this event was the fact that Stephanie is not a Federal employee. She is a contract worker employed at the Executive Office for U.S. Attorneys [EOUSA] in the Department of Justice. I have been informed that it is highly unusual for contract employees to receive any type of official recognition from the Government for their work. Yet, over the past 15 months, Stephanie has shown that she is not the typical contract employee.

Stephanie received this award for "motivating and stimulating EOUSA's Freedom of Information Act/Privacy Act [FOIA] staff with her team spirit, productive work ethics, and willingness to go the extra mile to reach the Attorney General's goal of reducing the FOIA backlog." This backlog, which resulted from Congress' reform and expansion of the FOIA legislation, at one point reached nearly 1,000 requests pending. It was through the hard work, willingness to work extra hours, and dedication to detail shown by Stephanie and three other contract employees, under the direction of Acting Director Bonnie Gay, that the backlog was reduced to zero by the end of fiscal year 1997. I would further note that despite the extraordinary circumstances of receiving recognition for their accomplishments from the Attorney General, none of them received any acknowledgement or congratulations from the contract employer.

What sets Stephanie apart in my mind from her colleagues is the fact that she accomplished all this while attending law school full time in the evenings at the University of Baltimore. I know from personal experience how difficult and demanding law school is, and believe that this underscores this young woman's strong work ethic.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I would note that the administration requested funding in the fiscal year 1998 budget for eight additional positions in the Executive Office for U.S. Attorneys to

handle FOIA requests. Furthermore, it is my understanding that two of Stephanie's colleagues have been brought on full time with the Government since the issuance of this award. It is my opinion that Stephanie has already shown, through her past performance, that she would make a fine addition to the expanded EOUSA FOIA staff.

RECIPROCAL TRADE AGREEMENT
AUTHORITIES ACT

HON. THOMAS J. MANTON

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 13, 1997

Mr. MANTON. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong opposition to H.R. 2621, the Reciprocal Trade Agreement Authorities Act. The debate over fast track is not a debate over whether the United States should engage in world trade. Clearly, we should. This debate is about whether our Government will finally adopt trade rules that will put the interests of working families first instead of the rights of corporations to make huge profits at their expense.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that trade agreements must not be considered in isolation of the consequences which might befall workers and the environment. Unfortunately, the bill before us does not require that future trade agreements ensure progress toward ensuring workers' rights and enhancing environmental protections. Instead, the bill limits the labor and environmental issues which can be considered under fast track authority to those that are "directly related to trade and decrease market opportunities for U.S. exports or distort U.S. trade." This wording attempts to hide the continued disregard for American workers behind carefully constructed language that allows trade negotiators to pay lip-service to environmental, consumer, and labor issues without requiring them to do anything about them. Instead, labor and environmental issues will be ignored or relegated to NAFTA-like side agreements which have proven to be wholly inadequate and have made implementation of these provisions virtually unenforceable in the past.

In addition, this fast track legislation grants the President wider authority over trade than given to any previous administration since its inception. And, while lawmakers could vote either up or down on a specific proposal, they would be stripped of their powers to amend, revise, correct, or improve complex, and far-reaching trade agreements, effectively denying Congress its constitutional right to regulate foreign commerce.

Mr. Speaker, the administration has promised that if granted fast track authority, they will use it to expand NAFTA to Chile as the first step toward creation of a Free Trade Zone of the Americas. But, after 3 years of the NAFTA experience, the evidence shows that as both a trade agreement and a trade model, NAFTA has been a failure. We have seen a trade surplus with Mexico transformed into a \$16 billion deficit, part of a total United States trade deficit with Canada and Mexico of \$48.3 billion dollars. We have seen a net loss of U.S. jobs in all 50 States totaling more than 420,000, including 20,000 in my home State of New York alone.

And, recently Mr. Speaker, the negative effects of NAFTA have struck my own Seventh

Congressional District of New York particularly hard. Swingline, a manufacturer of staples and staple products located in Long Island City, recently announced plans to close down their plant and move their operations to Mexico. The Swingline plant has operated in New York for the last 75 years, including the last 40 in Long Island City. Swingline has long been a fixture in the Long Island City community, employing more than 400 workers, a majority of whom have only known that job their entire lives.

In addition, we have seen increased Mexican imports, coupled with restrictive inspection requirements and inadequate funding, combining to overwhelm border inspection systems. This has resulted in an increased volume of tainted foods coming into the United States, most recently demonstrated with the outbreak of 130 cases of Hepatitis-A in Michigan which were traced to strawberries illegally imported from Mexico. We have also seen an increase in unsafe Mexican carrier traffic traveling over United States highways, as NAFTA has provided for neither the financial support nor regulatory incentives to bring Mexican standards up to United States levels. And, Mr. Speaker, we have seen an increase in the flow of illegal drugs from Mexico as NAFTA's new flood of truckloads of imports has provided the means by which these illegal contraband may enter the United States undetected. Recent State Department estimates show that now 70 percent of cocaine, 80 percent of marijuana, and 30 percent of heroin enter the United States through Mexico, up significantly from pre-NAFTA levels.

Mr. Speaker, fast track supporters would have you believe that without this authority, the United States will be shut out from entering into lucrative trade deals in South America. But this is just not true. Indeed, in recent years trade between the United States and South America has moved from a deficit to a healthy surplus, even though we do not have any NAFTA-type free trade agreements with these countries. And, a lack of fast track authority has also not prevented the current administration from having negotiated more than 200 trade agreements with other countries since 1993.

Mr. Speaker, as I stated before, the debate before us is not whether America trades with the world, but what are the rules under which that trade takes place. Workers rights, environmental protections, and food safety must have a place on the negotiating agenda for any trade agreement. Unfortunately, this legislation before us does not adequately provide for their consideration. Therefore, I urge all of my colleagues to reject this fast track legislation and to give all future trade agreements and our overall trade policy the careful scrutiny they require and deserve.

RECIPROCAL TRADE AGREEMENT
AUTHORITIES ACT

HON. JAY KIM

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 13, 1997

Mr. KIM. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 2621, the Reciprocal Trade Agreement Authorities Act, a bill to renew the President's authority to negotiate international trade